

## AN ADDRESS

*To the AUDIENCE, at the conclusion of the  
FIRST ANATOMICAL LECTURE delivered  
in a MEDICAL SCHOOL, which was built,  
and afterwards enlarged, by order of the  
GOVERNORS of one of the HOSPITALS in  
LONDON.*

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Gentlemen :—

WHEN, now, for the first time, I have the honor, as a Teacher, of addressing the Students in this enlarged theatre, I feel it right to avow my especial gratitude to the present Governors of this Hospital for their liberal patronage of the Medical School which their predecessors had established.

This patronage I consider to be highly

honorable to them, beneficial to the institution over which they preside, and to society at large.

Unquestionably, Hospitals are the best Schools of Medical Instruction, for in them we have the patient's conduct under control, and can regularly and closely trace the progress of disease to its cessation or fatal termination. In general, also, in the latter case, we have the opportunity of examining the actual nature of the disease, and learning whether our opinions and treatment of it had been correct or otherwise. Useful facts are thus accumulated, and the general stock of medical knowledge is augmented.

In Hospitals, likewise, Students, after having learned the scientific principles of their profession, have an opportunity of seeing them practically applied. The precept and the example are both before them, and

reciprocally impress each other on the memory. It is to little purpose to teach separately the multitudinous facts appertaining to the structure of the parts of the body, and repeat the numerous observations and experiments that have been made relative to their functions; for the knowledge thus communicated will necessarily be acquired with great labour by the pupil, and will be either soon forgotten or recollected with difficulty. It is only by contrasting the healthy form and appearance of parts of the body with the mutilations produced by accident and disease, and their healthy with their disordered functions, and shewing the rational means of cure, that Anatomy and Physiology can be rendered so highly interesting and important, as to impress indelibly on the memory what we have learned, and excite us earnestly to seek for an increase of knowledge. In Hospitals, also, students learn from the comparison of the numerous cases presented simultane-

ously to their observation, to discriminate those minute particulars which distinguish diseases from one another. For, many maladies apparently similar, are yet very different in their nature, so that they may be compared with the common herbage of the fields, in which, under a general resemblance, we find plants of very different qualities, some salutary, and others pernicious. In short, the practical knowledge of our profession is much more readily attained in Hospitals than it can be elsewhere ; and all the information which is there acquired is disseminated by means of the Students throughout society.

When a School of Medical Instruction is connected with the practice of an Hospital, we are able to select Students of whose zeal, capacity, industry, and duration of study we are assured, in order to render that subordinate assistance to patients which is necessary for the proper ma-

nagement of their cases. I am much gratified to be able to declare, that I know of no situation of life in which patients receive in general such good subordinate attendance as they meet with in these establishments. For I have constantly observed, that real Students of their profession are highly interested in the well doing of the cases that are thus in part confided to their management. They live almost wholly on the spot, are ready at all times to readjust dressings which the restlessness of patients may have displaced; and they often perform even menial and disgusting offices for the accommodation and comfort of those who are under their care.

In other countries Hospitals have been founded and supported by the government with a view to their becoming Schools of Medical Instruction, to supply the armies and public service with capable professional

characters, rather than for the purpose of humanely alleviating the sufferings of the sick and injured poor. Yet, whatever motives may have led to the first establishment of them in those countries, their utility as Schools of Medical Science is in every instance deemed of principal importance. In proof of this, I may mention, that no one can receive an appointment to practise in an Hospital abroad, who has not given public proofs of his professional zeal, industry, and superior ability, and who is not qualified to become a teacher of his profession. Students of promise are sent at the public charge to improve themselves in other countries, and on their return receive appointments to practise in Hospitals in their own. Those who are learning their profession are not suffered to officiate as dressers till they have evinced their proficiency by public examinations. Records of interesting cases occurring in



Hospitals are expected to be kept, and the dissections of such as terminate fatally to be correctly registered.

In this country, however, where Hospitals have been chiefly founded and supported in consequence of the benevolent feelings of the public, the more immediate and more interesting object of relieving the sufferings of the sick and injured poor, has so entirely engrossed the attention of their Directors, that their utility as Schools of Medical Instruction has been but little considered. It is true, indeed, that medical men have, by degrees, converted the Hospitals of this country into Schools of Medical Instruction, but this has often been done in opposition to the wishes of the benevolent Directors of these charities. I know of no instance, except the present, in which the Governors of an Hospital have of their own accord established and patronized a School of Medical Instruction in con-

nexion with the practice of the Institution. Surely then, this act must be considered honorable to the Governors, because it shews, that they have taken enlarged views of the benefits which these Institutions are adapted to confer upon society. It claims my especial gratitude, and I am convinced, that the Students must ever participate in my feelings, and shew by their conduct, with respect to the patients, that they are not undeserving of the patronage to which they are themselves so highly indebted.

After having thus adverted to this memorable and almost solitary instance of public patronage being bestowed on Medical Education in this country, I cannot but express my deep regret that the public in general are not more attentive to the nature and wants of Medical Science, in which, nevertheless, they are vitally interested. This inattention would, indeed, be less deplorable, if ignorance were merely a nega-



tive quality, if failing to do right, it forbore to do wrong; but it is most mischievously active, and greatly augments "the various ills which flesh is heir to." Those who have studied their profession, as a science, must always be the observant and respectful followers of nature. They never presume to precede her, except to remove some impediment from her path, or to perform what she evidently indicates. But the ignorant take the lead; place obstacles in the way of nature's progress; and presume to direct her course. So admirably are we constituted, that the very actions of disease often tend to the restoration of health. Yet these beneficial actions, by the ignorant denominated diseases, are put a stop to, and a far worse malady is in consequence established; trivial diseases also are suspended, or we may say cured, by means destructive of health, and productive of lingering infirmity.

Now, in other countries, the means of promoting medical knowledge, and preventing the mischievous effects of ignorance, have been studied and prosecuted by their governments, which have consequently and with especial care, provided means of teaching anatomy; for this forms the only basis on which the superstructure of Medical Science can possibly be built. We must understand the healthy structure and functions of the various organs and parts of the body, or we can never understand the nature of their diseases, nor the rational mode of effecting their cure. How absurd would be the conduct of a mechanic, whose business it was to rectify the errors of any complex machine, were he merely to provide himself with the finest and fittest tools for the purpose, and yet neglect to learn its mechanism, by which alone he will be able to discover the causes of the errors or stoppage of its different movements, and conse-

quently what is wanting to be done to render it again perfect or useful. Yet equally absurd, would be the conduct of Medical Men, were they to study botany, chemistry, and natural philosophy, searching indeed through all the paths of nature, and the stores of art, for means of cure; and yet neglect anatomy, by which alone they can distinguish the nature of the difference between health and disease, and consequently what is requisite to reconvert the latter into the former, which is the only circumstance that can render medicine a science.

All foreigners express astonishment, when informed, that the Teachers of Anatomy, in this country, are obliged to depend, for the power of communicating this most necessary and important knowledge, upon a precarious supply of bodies, which have been suffered to become putrid, and afterwards been interred. This is, indeed, a national disgrace; and formerly I would not wil-

lingly have acknowledged the fact of the disinterment of bodies, because it tends to disquiet the best feelings of the public. The newspaper writers, however, have so blazoned it forth, as to render any attempt to conceal it unavailing. Still I would beseech these worthy gentlemen, nay, indeed, even magistrates in general, to consider, 1st, the necessity of the case; and 2dly, that the act is uninjurious if unknown. It only becomes injurious in consequence of its promulgation, and therefore its detection ought as much as possible to be suppressed. I know that the necessity of the case became a subject of deep interest and consideration to men of the first intellect, knowledge, and rank in the kingdom. It was not long after the commencement of the last war, that the detection and trumpeting forth of an offence of this nature induced a member of parliament to move for a bill to make it felonious. I, with others of our profession, stated to those

in power, that there were at that time more than 200 young men who came up annually to London to obtain a stock of anatomical knowledge which was to last them throughout their lives; and that at the conclusion of the season, these Students were employed in the army and navy, where their services were then greatly wanted. I begged those with whom we had the honor of conversing, to reflect on the consequences of sending forth these young men in ignorance, to torment and increase the hazard and sufferings of their valiant countrymen. Every conversation ended with this decision, that the study of Anatomy was indispensable, and must not be impeded.

There are unhappily in this, as in other countries, numbers who die without friends or relatives to mourn their loss. If, then, the superintendants of prisons, poor houses, and eleemosynary establishments, would but consent that the remains of those who

die in such circumstances, or are unclaimed, should be made the subjects of anatomical instruction, we should be put upon the same footing as other nations, and the obnoxious offence of disinterring the dead would be no longer necessary or committed.

In other countries the police can direct that to be done, which is contributory to the public good, though contrary to the feelings and will of the parties immediately concerned ; who, however, readily and completely acquiesce in what they know to be unavoidable, and is established by custom. In no place could the prejudices against dissection have been more strong than they were at one period in Paris. Yet, at present, the bodies of those who die destitute are brought, sewed up in matting, to the different Anatomical Schools, and when dissected, are returned in the same manner for interment, without exciting any dis-



turbance, or even the attention of the public mind.

In this country, however, the police can interfere no further than with a view to prevent or punish the infraction of established laws ; so that the correction of these errors and abuses rests entirely with the public. On the good sense of the British public I place the greatest possible reliance ; but it is extremely difficult to induce the public to attend to subjects in which they do not feel an immediate personal interest ; or to engage in the calm consideration of them, when disturbed by their feelings and prejudices.

FINIS.

